



THE UNITED STATES CONFERENCE OF MAYORS

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December 19, 2012

The Honorable Harry Reid, Majority Leader
U.S. Senate
522 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable John Boehner, Speaker
U.S. House of Representatives
H-232, The Capitol
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Mitch McConnell, Minority
Leader
U.S. Senate
317 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi, Minority Leader
U.S. House of Representatives
H-204, The Capitol
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Senator Reid, Senator McConnell, Speaker Boehner, and Leader Pelosi:

On behalf of the United States Conference of Mayors, the nation's premier organization of mayors, we the undersigned United States Mayors, respectfully urge you to ensure the continuation of crucial food system programs before the end of the legislative year on December 31, 2012, either through passage of a five-year Farm Bill or an extension of the 2008 bill that includes authorization and funding for key programs that expired on September 30. This legislation has direct impacts on constituents in large and small cities across the country. The nutrition and emergency assistance programs offer a vital safety net, while other important programs are increasing access to healthy foods, stimulating new economic activity, creating links between cities and rural communities, and ensuring environmental stewardship.

A new Farm Bill must protect human and environmental health, promote job growth and build the infrastructure we need for healthy sustainable food systems. It should:

- Maintain current benefit levels for the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP)
- Strengthen the Emergency Food Assistance Program (TEFAP)
- Assure full funding for the Commodity Supplemental Food Program (CSFP)
- Expand food stamp access at farmers markets, including increase the use of Electronic Benefits Transfer (EBT) transactions.
- Preserve and expand the Senior Farmer's Market Nutrition Program, farm-to-cafeteria programs that bring fresh, locally grown food into school lunch programs, and the Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Snack Program
- Strengthen and expand agriculture conservation programs as a strategic investment in our country's agricultural infrastructure, including improving air and water quality and the protection of urban watersheds, and requiring conservation compliance for land covered by crop insurance
- Support local and regional food system infrastructure

Failure to complete a comprehensive new bill before the end of the year would have detrimental effects on communities that are already struggling. If that cannot be done we urge you to include the following expired programs in an extension of the 2008 law:

- Farmers Market Promotion Program
- Senior Farmers Market Nutrition Program
- Assistance for Community Food Projects: Healthy Urban Food Enterprise Development
- Outreach and Technical Assistance for Socially Disadvantaged Farmers and Ranchers
- Beginning Farmer and Rancher Development Program
- National Organic Certification Cost Share Program, Organic Production and Market Data Initiative, Organic Agriculture Research and Extension Initiative

If you have questions, please contact U. S. Conference of Mayors Assistant Executive Director Crystal Swann at 202-861-6707 or cswann@usmayors.org.

Sincerely,

Mayor Michael A. Nutter
City of Philadelphia, PA
President, U.S. Conference of Mayors

Mayor Antonio Villaraigosa
City of Los Angeles, CA
Past President

Mayor Kevin M. Johnson
City of Sacramento, CA
2nd Vice President,

Mayor Thomas M. Menino
City of Boston, MA
Chair, Food Policy Task Force

Mayor Stephanie Rawlings-Blake
City of Baltimore, MD
Vice-Chair, Food Policy Task Force

Mayor James Schmitt
City of Green Bay, WI

Mayor Vincent Gray
City of Washington, DC

Mayor Dave Bing
City of Detroit, MI

Mayor Micheal McGinn
City of Seattle, WA

Mayor Greg Fischer
City of Louisville, KY

Mayor Carolyn Goodman
City of Las Vegas, NV

Mayor Sam Adams
City of Portland, OR

Mayor Michael B. Hancock
City of Denver, CO

Mayor Paul Soglin
City of Madison, WI

Mayor Angel Taveras
City of Providence, RI

Mayor Jerry W. Willey
City of Hillsboro, OR

Mayor Mark Stodola
City of Little Rock, AR

Mayor William A. Flanagan
City of Fall River, MA

Mayor William D. Euille
City of Alexandria, VA

Mayor Donald Plusquellic
City of Akron, OH

Mayor Stephen K. Benjamin
City of Columbia, SC

Mayor Harvey Johnson, Jr.
City of Jackson, MS

Mayor James Thomas, Jr.
City of Hinesville, GA

Mayor Raul G. Salina
City of Laredo, TX

Mayor David J. Berger
City of Lima, OH

Mayor Jan Howell Marx
City of San Luis Obispo, CA

Mayor Dennis Donohue
City of Salinas, CA

Mayor Ralph Becker
City of Salt Lake, UT

Mayor Paul A. Dyster
City of Niagara Falls, NY

Mayor Francis Slay
City of St. Louis, MO

Mayor Susan M. Kay
City of Weymouth, MA

Mayor Edward Kelley
City of Cleveland Heights, OH

Mayor Ed Pawlowski
City of Allentown, PA

Mayor Antonia Ricigliano
Township of Edison, NJ

Mayor Arlene J. Mulder
Village of Arlington Heights, OH

Mayor Ardell F. Brede
City of Rochester, MN

Mayor Marcia A. Leclerc
Town of East Hartford, CT

cc: U.S. Senate
U.S. House of Representatives